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(54) **ADAPTIVE ERROR CORRECTION IN A MEMORY SYSTEM**

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Related U.S. Application Data

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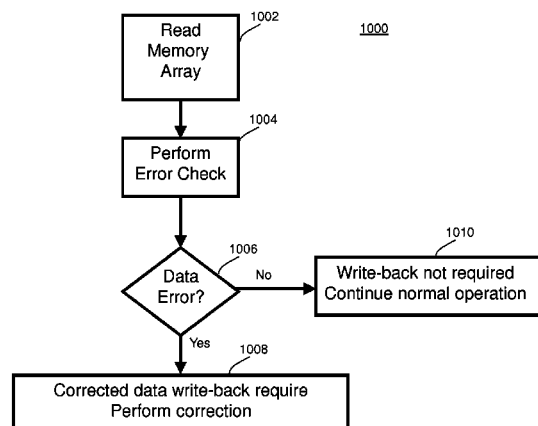
(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 11/10 (2006.01)
G11C 29/52 (2006.01)

(Continued)

According to one aspect, a method for adaptive error correction in a memory system includes reading data from a memory array of a non-volatile memory device in the memory system. Error correcting logic checks the data for at least one error condition stored in the memory array. Based on determining that the at least one error condition exists, a write-back indicator is asserted by the error correcting logic to request correction of the at least one error condition. Based on determining that the at least one error condition does not exist, accesses of the memory array continue without asserting the write-back indicator.

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G06F 11/1068** (2013.01); **G06F 11/1008**

7 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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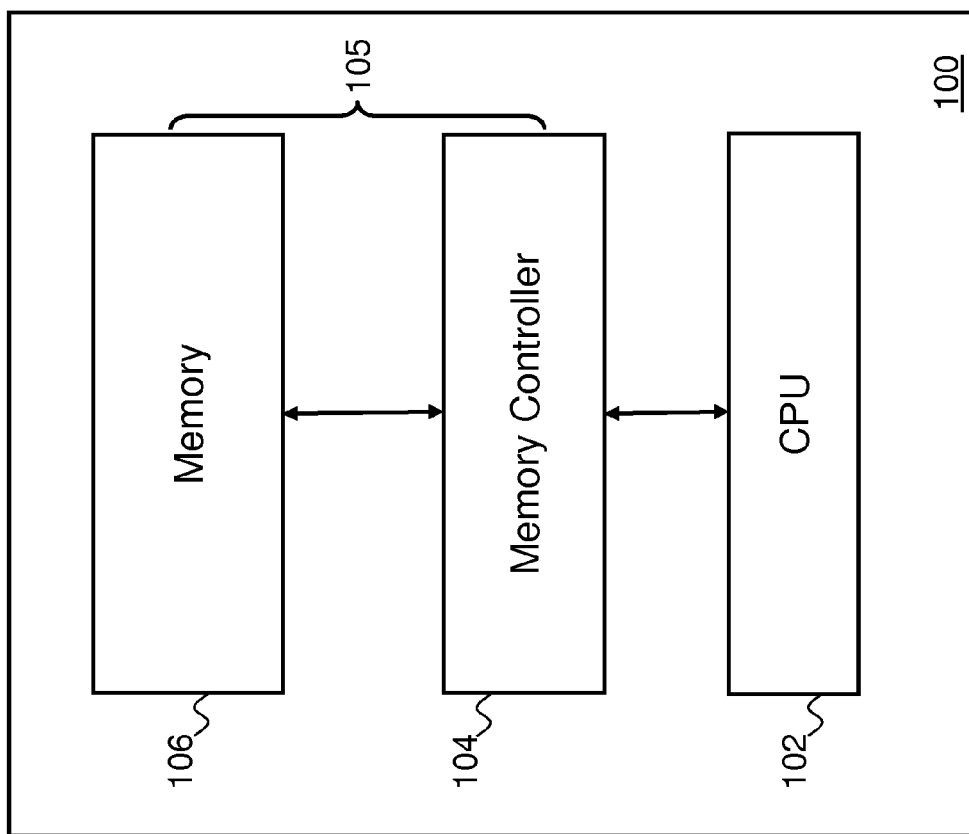


FIG. 1

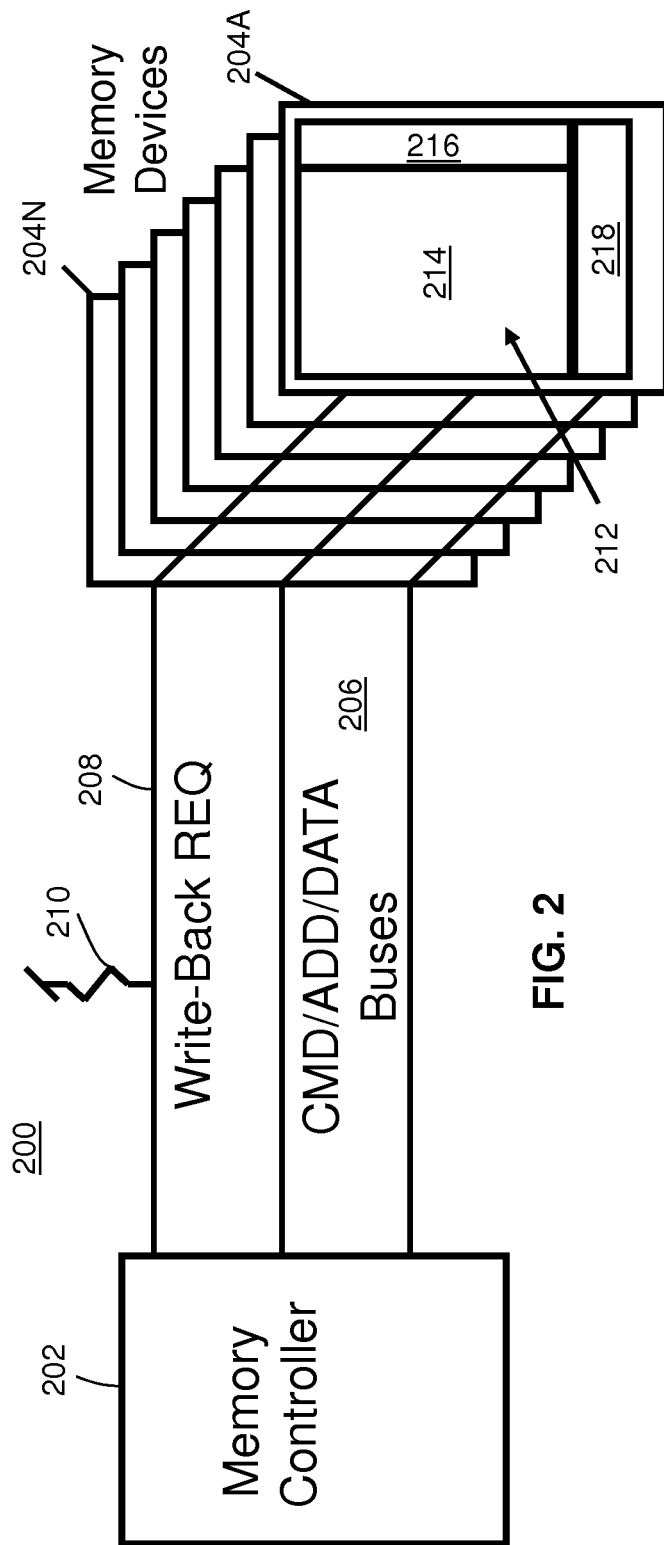


FIG. 2

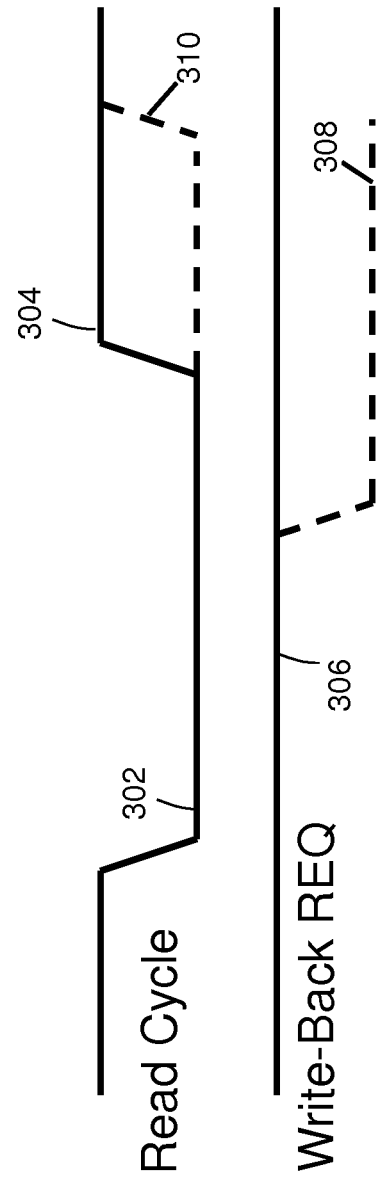


FIG. 3

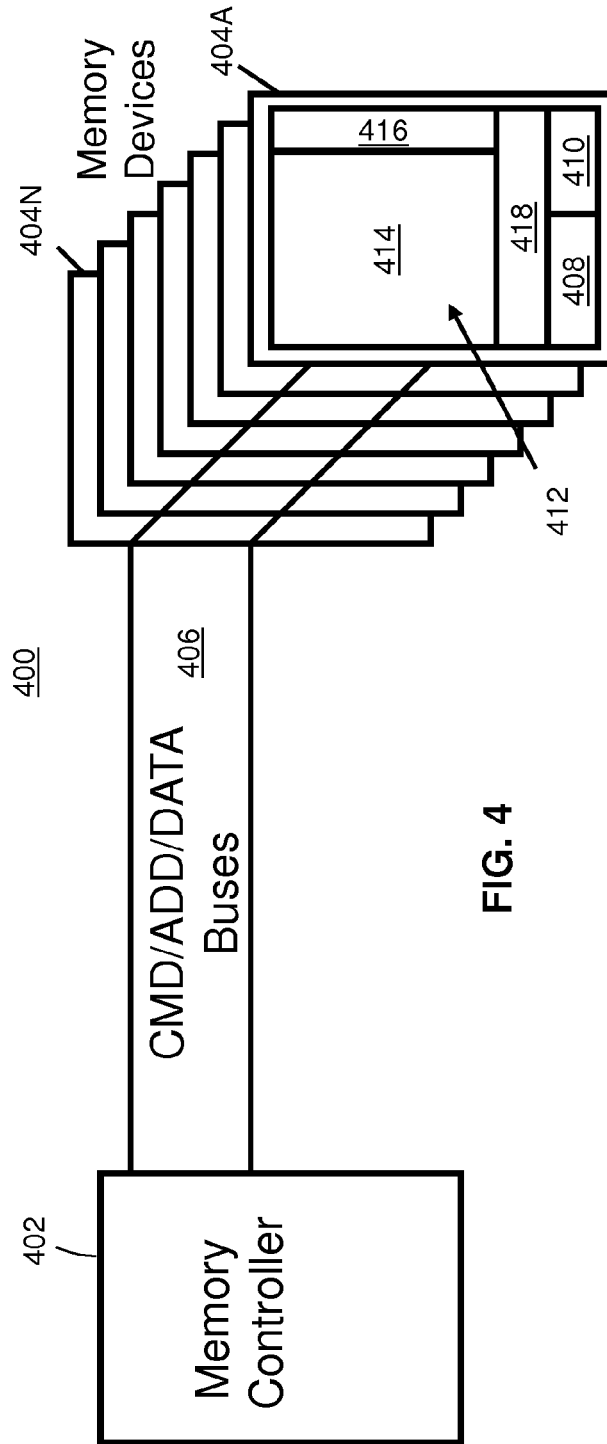


FIG. 4

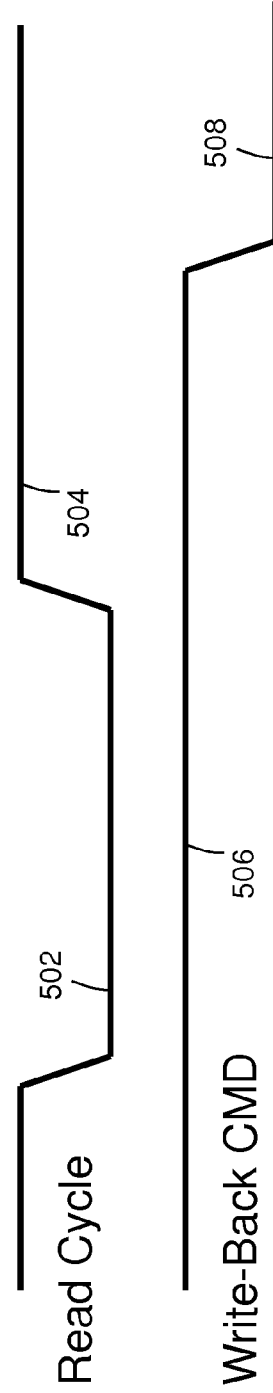


FIG. 5

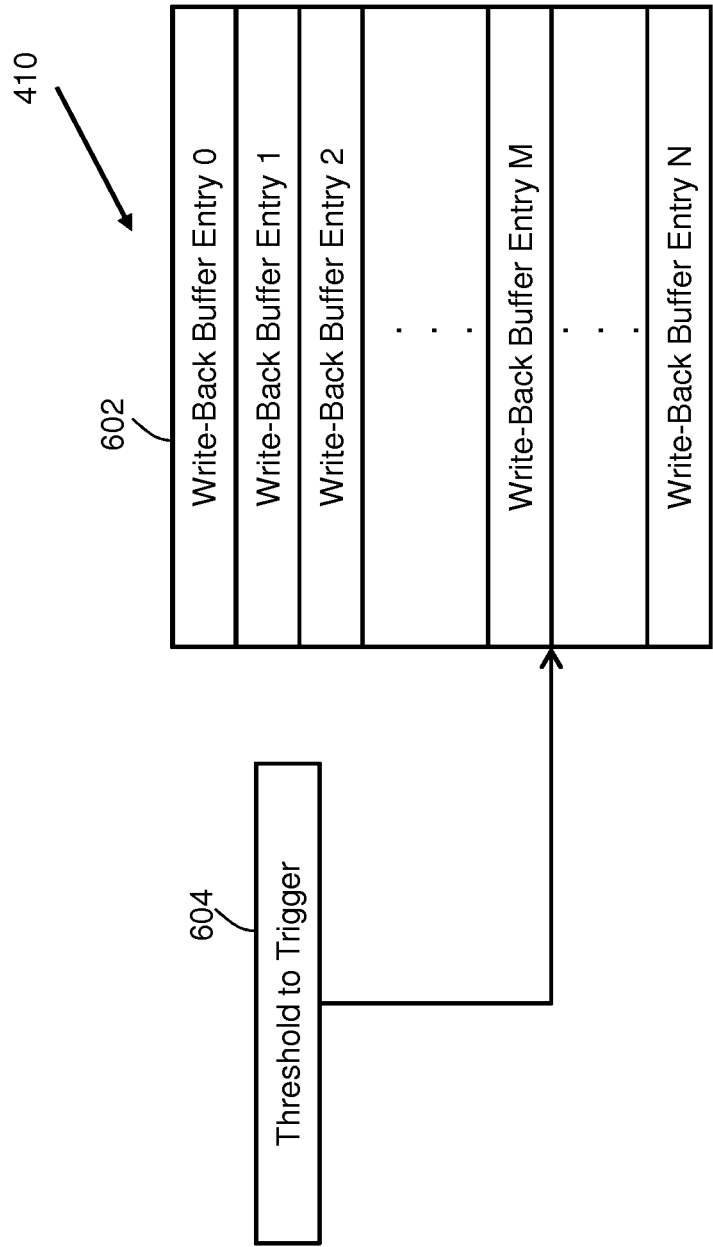


FIG. 6

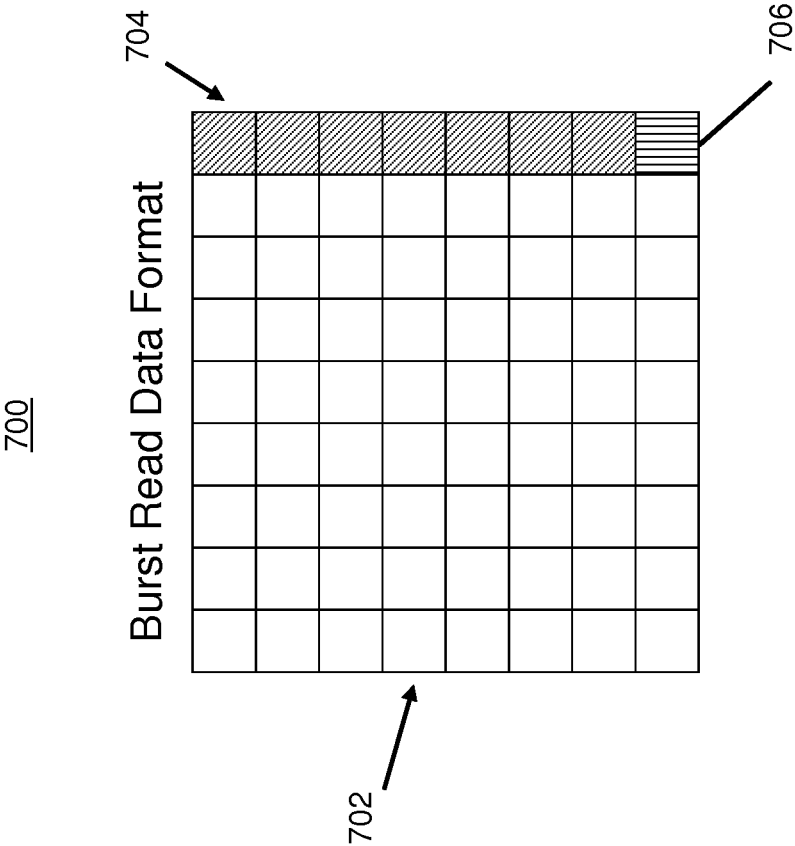
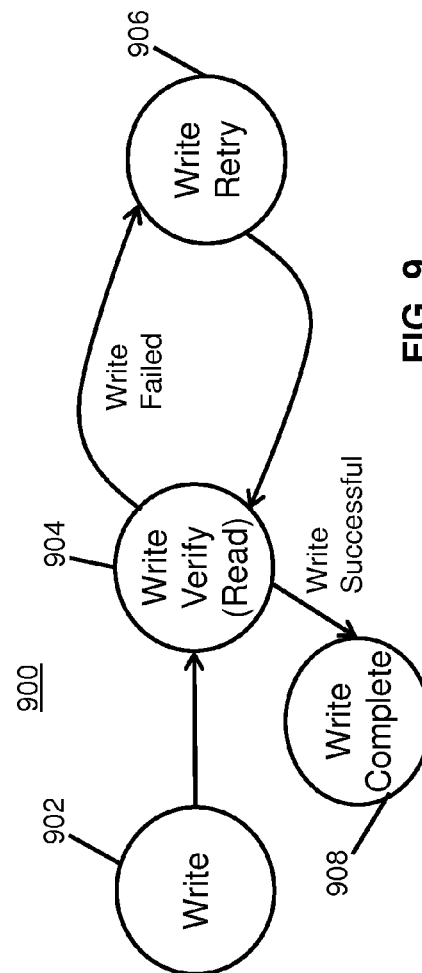
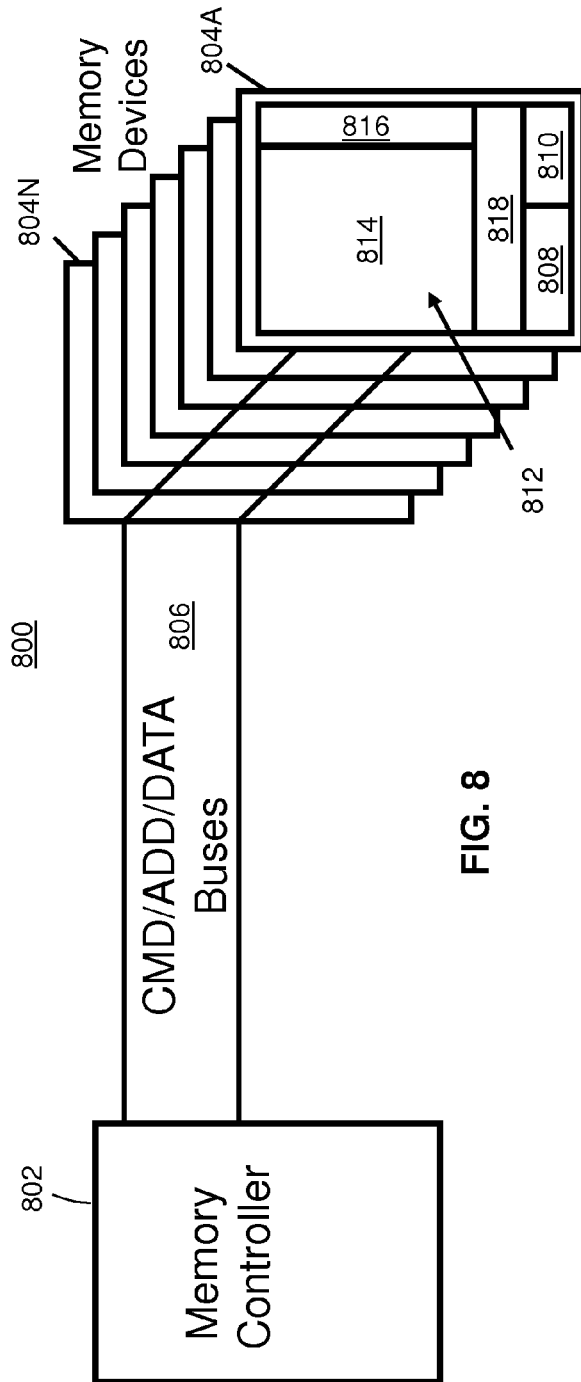


FIG. 7



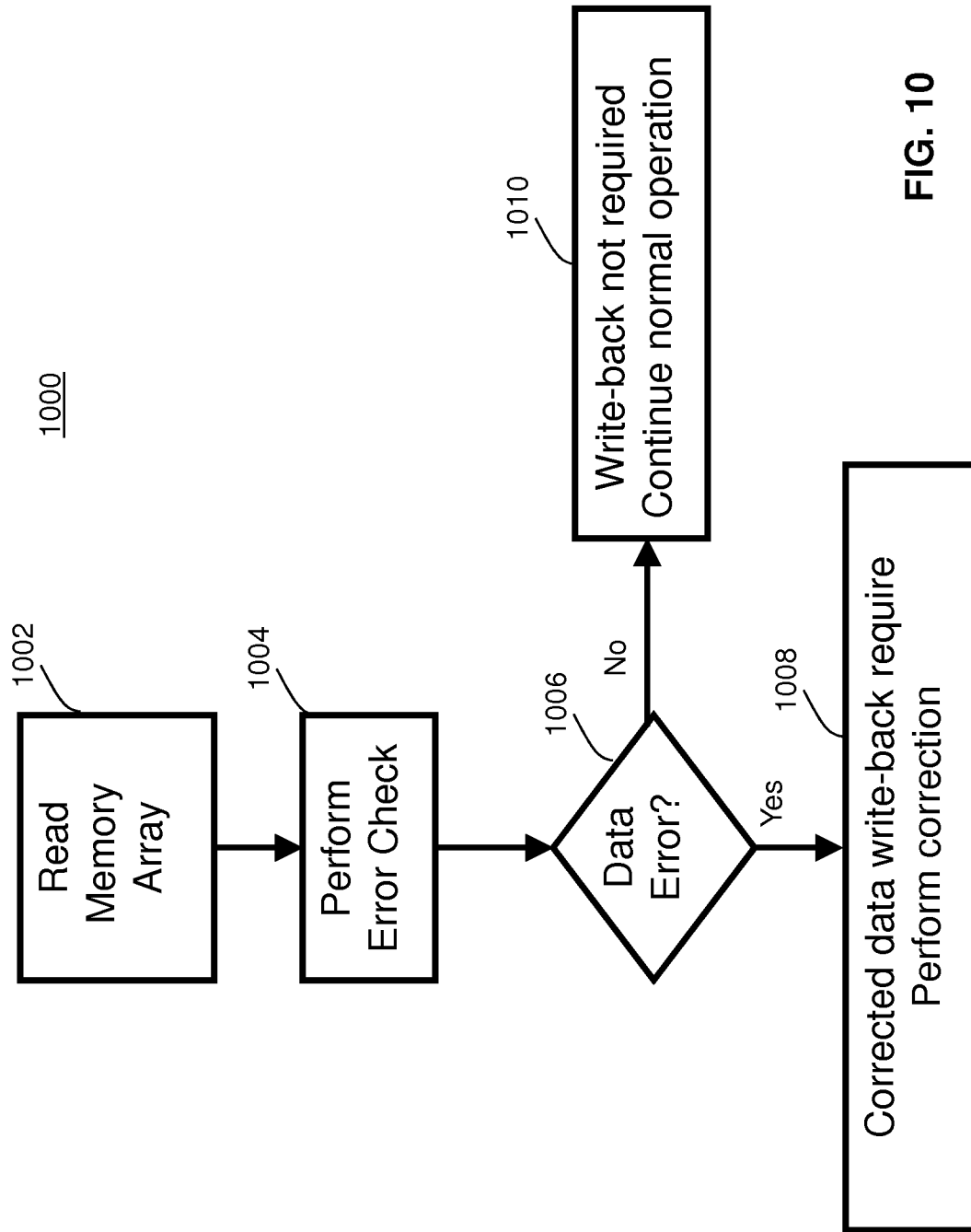


FIG. 10

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**ADAPTIVE ERROR CORRECTION IN A
MEMORY SYSTEM****DOMESTIC PRIORITY**

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/446,922 filed Jul. 30, 2014, the content of which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

The present invention relates generally to computer memory, and more particularly, to adaptive error correction in a memory system.

Computer systems often require a considerable amount of high speed memory to hold information, such as data and programs, when a computer is powered and operational. This information is normally binary, composed of patterns of 1's and 0's known as bits of data. The bits of data are typically stored in separate cells of memory devices. Current and emerging memory and storage technologies may experience single cell bit errors during a storage interval. In dynamic random access memory (DRAM) technology, these types of errors can be caused by cell leakage, alpha particle collision events, variable retention phenomena and several other means. DRAM is a type of volatile memory that uses capacitors to store bits as levels of charge. DRAM requires periodic refreshing to maintain correct charge levels within memory cells. DRAM read operations are typically destructive in that the process of reading cell values can change the charge level per cell. To restore the correct charge level as part of a read operation, a write-back operation is performed such that the intended bit state of each cell is maintained.

Current state of the art systems typically resolve memory bit errors through error correction techniques at the system level. As technology scaling results in denser memory cell counts per memory device, single cell error rates are likely to increase in memory systems.

SUMMARY

According to one embodiment, a method for adaptive error correction in a memory system includes reading data from a memory array of a non-volatile memory device in the memory system. Error correcting logic checks the data for at least one error condition stored in the memory array. Based on determining that the at least one error condition exists, a write-back indicator is asserted by the error correcting logic to request correction of the at least one error condition. Based on determining that the at least one error condition does not exist, accesses of the memory array continue without asserting the write-back indicator.

Additional features and advantages are realized through the techniques of the present invention. Other embodiments and aspects of the invention are described in detail herein and are considered a part of the claimed invention. For a better understanding of the invention with the advantages and the features, refer to the description and to the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The subject matter which is regarded as the invention is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the claims at the conclusion of the specification. The forgoing and other features, and advantages of the invention are apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

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FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a system operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a memory system operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 3 illustrates an example of cycle timing adjustment based on a write-back request in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 4 illustrates another example of a block diagram of a memory system operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 5 illustrates an example of write back command timing relative to a read cycle in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 6 illustrates an example of multiple write-back buffer entries and an associated threshold in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 7 illustrates an example of a burst read data format in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 8 illustrates another example of a block diagram of a memory system operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment;

FIG. 9 illustrates an example of a state transition diagram for a write operation in accordance with an embodiment; and

FIG. 10 illustrates a flow diagram of a method for performing adaptive error correction in a memory system in accordance with an embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

An embodiment is directed to performing adaptive error correction in a memory system that includes non-volatile memory devices. Volatile memory such as DRAM may require a write-back operation after each read operation to ensure that memory cells in the DRAM are restored after a destructive read operation. Many non-volatile memory devices perform non-destructive read operations, in that reading the non-volatile memory devices does not alter the state of the memory cells. Unlike volatile memory devices, non-volatile memory can retain memory cell state values through cycling of power off-and-on. Examples of non-volatile memory devices that can incorporate embodiments as described herein include phase-change memory (PCM), magnetoresistive random-access memory (MRAM), ferroelectric RAM (FeRAM), nonvolatile static RAM (nvSRAM), and restrictive RAM (ReRAM), as well as other non-volatile memory technologies known in the art. Non-volatile memory can degrade over time, under thermal loads, or due to other effects such that one or more memory cell values can change from a '0' to a '1' or vice versa.

In exemplary embodiments, one or more non-volatile memory devices each include localized error correcting logic to perform localized error checking prior to returning data to a memory controller. The error correcting logic can use an error-correcting code to locally correct the errant data within the non-volatile memory device. Upon checking data in the non-volatile memory device for an error, a write-back indicator can be asserted to request error correction. The write-back indicator can be sent back to a memory controller to either indicate that a write-back command must be issued or as a status of a memory device initiated write back. Where the memory device initiates the write-back locally, a current cycle time may be extended. For instance, during a read cycle, the read cycle timing can be extended by the memory device initiating the write-back. Alternatively, the memory device can internally retain the write-back indicator and

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upon receiving a write-back command from the memory controller, the memory device can perform a write-back if its respective write-back indicator is set.

When no error conditions are identified, the write-back indicator is not set and normal access to the memory device can continue. Thus, for cases where a read cycle is extended based on the write-back indicator being set, the extended cycle time for a write-back operation only occurs when a write-back is needed rather than performing a write-back after every read operation.

FIG. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a system 100 operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment. The system 100 depicted in FIG. 1 includes a computer processor 102, memory 106 including multiple non-volatile memory devices, and a memory controller 104 for receiving data from the computer processor 102 to be stored in the memory 106. Collectively, the memory controller 104 and the memory 106 are referred to as a memory system 105. In an embodiment, the non-volatile memory devices of the memory 106 are arranged into ranks or groups of non-volatile memory devices accessible at the same time.

In one embodiment the memory controller 104 is coupled to the computer processor 102 and receives write requests from the computer processor 102. The write requests contain data to be written to the memory 106 and a logical address for identifying the location in the memory 106 to which the data will be written. The memory controller 104 stores data at a physical address within the memory 106. In an embodiment, the memory controller 104 maps the logic address to a physical address in the memory 106 when storing or retrieving data.

The system 100 is one example of a configuration that may be utilized to perform the processing described herein. Although the system 100 has been depicted with only a memory 106, memory controller 104, and computer processor 102, it will be understood that other embodiments would also operate in other systems including additional elements, e.g., multiple computers processors 102 and multiple levels of memory 106. In an embodiment, the memory 106, memory controller 104, and computer processor 102 are not located within the same computer. For example, the memory 106 and memory controller 104 may be located in one physical location (e.g., on a memory module) while the computer processor 102 is located in another physical location (e.g., the computer processor 102 accesses the memory controller 104 via a network). In addition, portions of the processing described herein may span one or more of the memory 106, memory controller 104, and computer processor 102.

FIG. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a memory system 200 operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment. The memory system 200 is an embodiment of the memory system 105 of FIG. 1. In the example of FIG. 2, memory controller 202 is operably coupled to non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N. Command, address, and data buses 206 enable read and write commands to be issued from the memory controller 202 to the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N. A write-back request 208 may be driven as a discrete signal output from the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N as a write-back indicator to the memory controller 202. The write-back request 208 may be an open drain pull up dotted OR (indicated as pull up resistor 210) across several of the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N. One or more of the memory devices 204A-204N can drive the write-back request 208 by asserting a write-back indicator based on

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detecting at least one error condition stored in a memory array 212. Each of the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N can include a memory array 212 that stores data 214 and check data 216. The check data 216 may be error-correcting code (ECC) check data that can be used by error correcting logic 218 in each of the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N to detect and correct errors. For example, the error correcting logic 218 can compute an error-correcting code of the data 214 read from the memory array 212 and read check data 216 from the memory array 212. A mismatch between the error-correcting code computed upon reading the data 214 and the check data 216 read from the memory array 212 can identify an error. This results in asserting a write-back indicator that drives the write-back request 208.

The check data 216 can be used to compute a corrected version of the data 214 to report back to the memory controller 202 and to be written back to the memory array 212. The data 214 and check data 216 can include any number of individual cells or bits. A write-back operation can be performed on an individual memory device basis such that any of the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N identifying an error can correct respective data 214. Error detection and correction on write-back can be performed on a word basis, a page basis, a bank basis, or any subdivision unit basis within each of the non-volatile memory devices 204A-204N. When a memory device, such as non-volatile memory device 204A, determines that a write-back is needed while performing a read cycle, the non-volatile memory device 204A can assert the write-back request 208 while performing the write-back of the corrected data. This may result in extending the current cycle time at the memory controller 202.

FIG. 3 illustrates an example of cycle timing adjustment based on a write-back request in accordance with an embodiment. FIG. 3 is described with further reference to FIG. 2. The memory controller 202 initiates a read cycle by driving a read cycle signal of the buses 206 to a low state 302 (i.e., asserted in this example). Under normal operating conditions, when no error is detected by the error correcting logic 218, then the write-back indicator is not asserted on the write-back request 208, the data 214 is returned to the memory controller 202, and normal operation continues where further accesses of the memory array 212 can be made on subsequent commands. A read cycle normally ends at a predictable time, and the memory controller 202 sets the read cycle to a high state 304 (i.e., not asserted in this example) after a predetermined cycle time interval. If the error correcting logic 218 detects at least one error condition upon reading the memory array 212 in response to a read command, the error correcting logic 218 can assert a write-back indicator that drives the write-back request 208 from a high state 306 (i.e., not asserted in this example) to a low state 308 (i.e., asserted in this example). Assertion of the write-back request 208 can result in extending cycle timing of the read cycle which time shifts a transition 310 between the low state 302 and high state 304 of the read cycle. Since the cycle time extension only occurs on detected error conditions resulting in a write-back, the additional read cycle completion latency is only occasionally incurred rather than performing a write-back as part of every read operation.

FIG. 4 illustrates another example of a block diagram of a memory system 400 operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment. Similar to the memory system 200 of FIG. 2, the memory system 400 of FIG. 4 is an embodiment of the memory system 105 of FIG. 1 and includes a memory controller 402 operably coupled to

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non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N**. Command, address, and data buses **406** enable read and write commands to be issued from the memory controller **402** to the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N**. Rather than providing a separate write-back request, such as the write-back request **208** of FIG. 2, the memory system **400** does not include a dedicated discrete output to be driven in response to a write-back indicator **408** generated by one or more of the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N**.

Each of the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** can include a memory array **412** that stores data **414** and check data **416**. The check data **416** may be error-correcting code (ECC) check data that can be used by error correcting logic **418** in each of the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** to detect and correct errors. For example, the error correcting logic **418** can compute an error-correcting code of the data **414** read from the memory array **412** and read check data **416** from the memory array **412**. A mismatch between the error-correcting code calculated upon reading the data **414** and the check data **416** read from the memory array **412** can identify an error. This results in asserting the write-back indicator **408**. A write-back buffer **410** may be included in each of the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** to store a corrected version of the data **414** as write-back data. The write-back data can be written from the write-back buffer **410** to the memory array **412** based on receiving a write-back command from the memory controller **402**. In an embodiment where the write-back indicator **408** is not reported to the memory controller **402**, the memory controller **402** can periodically issue a write back command to the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N**. In an alternate embodiment, the write-back indicator **408** is sent to the memory controller **402** as an encoded message, such as a bit in a read data burst. Since the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** buffer the write-back data, the memory controller **402** need not respond immediately to the write-back indicator **408** but can schedule a write-back command for a future time.

FIG. 5 illustrates an example of write-back command timing relative to a read cycle in accordance with an embodiment. FIG. 5 is described in reference to FIG. 4. The memory controller **402** initiates a read cycle by driving a read cycle signal of the buses **406** to a low state **502** (i.e., asserted in this example). Regardless of whether or not the write-back indicator **408** is asserted the timing of the read cycle remains consistent, and the memory controller **402** sets the read cycle to a high state **504** (i.e., not asserted in this example) after a predetermined cycle time interval. In the example of FIG. 5 as the read cycle transitions between the low state **502** and the high state **504**, a write-back command of the buses **406** remains at a high state **506** (i.e., not asserted in this example). At some future time when the read cycle is at the high state **504**, the memory controller **402** sends the write-back command to the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** by driving the write-back command to a low state **508** (i.e., asserted in this example). This triggers any of the non-volatile memory devices **404A-404N** having an asserted write-back indicator **408** to update data **414** in each respective memory array **412** with write-back data from the respective write-back buffer **410**.

FIG. 6 illustrates an example of multiple write-back buffer entries **602** and an associated threshold **604** in accordance with an embodiment. With continued reference to FIG. 4, the write-back buffer **410** can include multiple write-back buffer entries **602** associated with addresses that resulted in an errant read. Rather than immediately notifying the memory controller **402** when at least one write-back is needed, the

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threshold **604** can be used to define a threshold number of the write-back buffer entries **602** to populate before notifying the memory controller **402** that a write-back is needed. In the example of FIG. 6, the threshold **604** is set to trigger notification upon populating write-back buffer entry number 'M', where 'M' is a number between a first entry number (i.e., entry 0) and a maximum entry number (i.e., entry N). Setting the threshold **604** to an intermediate value allows more time to elapse between write-back operations while leaving one or more additional buffer entries available should the memory controller **402** delay scheduling of the write-back command. The threshold **604** can be configurable as part of a mode register to any value between '0' and 'N' in the example of FIG. 6.

In one embodiment, when a read command is issued to the same address as one of the write-back buffer entries **602**, then the read data is returned from the corresponding write-back buffer entry **602**. Similarly, when a write command is issued to the same address as one of the write-back buffer entries **602**, then the write data can be written directly to the memory and the corresponding write back buffer entry **602** can be cleared.

FIG. 7 illustrates an example of a burst read data format **700** in accordance with an embodiment. The burst read data format **700** is an example where read data **702**, check data **704**, and a write-back indicator **706** can be sent in response to a burst read command. With respect to the example of FIG. 4, the burst read data format **700** allows the write-back indicator **408** to be encoded and sent on buses **406** as the write-back indicator **706**. When there are no errors in the data **414** of FIG. 4, the read data **702** in the burst read data format **700** is a copy of a number of bits from the data **414**. When there is an error, the read data **702** can be a corrected version of the data **414**. The check data **704** can be copied from the check data **416** of FIG. 4 or generated for the particular sizing of the burst read data format **700**. For instance, the check data **704** can be cyclic redundancy check (CRC) bits, data bus inversion (DBI) bits, ECC bits, or another error checking format known in the art.

FIG. 8 illustrates another example of a block diagram of a memory system **800** operable to perform adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment. Similar to the memory system **400** of FIG. 4, the memory system **800** of FIG. 8 is an embodiment of the memory system **105** of FIG. 1 and includes a memory controller **802** operably coupled to non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N**. Command, address, and data buses **806** enable read and write commands to be issued from the memory controller **802** to the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N**.

Each of the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** can include a memory array **812** that stores data **814** and check data **816**. The check data **816** may be error-correcting code (ECC) check data that can be used by error correcting logic **818** in each of the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** to detect and correct errors. For example, the error correcting logic **818** can compute an error-correcting code of the data **814** read from the memory array **812** and read check data **816** from the memory array **812** as part of a write verify operation. A mismatch between the error-correcting code calculated upon reading the data **814** and the check data **816** read from the memory array **812** can identify an error. This results in asserting the write-back indicator **808**. A write retry buffer **810** may be included in each of the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** to store write data to be written to the memory array **812** based on receiving a write command from the memory controller **802**. The write data can be written from the write retry buffer **810** to the memory array

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812 when executing a write command from the memory controller **802**. Reading of the data **814** from the memory array **812** can be performed as a write verify operation, where correction of at least one error condition is performed as a write retry operation.

Rather than using the check data **816** for write verification, the write verification may be performed by attempting to store write data from the write retry buffer **810**, reading the data **814** after the write operation, and comparing the data **814** read from the memory array **812** to the write data in the write retry buffer **810** to confirm that no bit differences are detected. In one embodiment, the memory system **400** of FIG. **4** and the memory system **800** are the same, where the write-back buffer **410** of FIG. **4** also functions as the write retry buffer **810** of FIG. **8**.

In an embodiment where the write-back indicator **808** is not reported to the memory controller **802**, the memory controller **802** can periodically issue a write retry command to the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N**. In an alternate embodiment, the write-back indicator **808** is sent to the memory controller **802** as an encoded message, such as a bit in a data burst. Since the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** buffer the write data, the memory controller **802** need not respond immediately to the write-back indicator **808** but can schedule a write retry command for a future time.

FIG. **9** illustrates an example of a state transition diagram **900** for a write operation in accordance with an embodiment. FIG. **9** is described with continued reference to FIG. **8**. When a write command is received the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** at write state **902**, the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** transition to a write verify state **904** to read the memory array **812** and confirm that the write was successful. If the write failed, the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** transition to a write retry state **906** to attempt the write again using write data in the write retry buffer **810**. After attempting a write retry, the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** return to the write verify state **904**. If at the write verify state **904** the write is deemed successful, the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N** transition to a write complete state **908** and further read/write operations can be performed. The state transitions in the state transition diagram **900** can be driven by the memory controller **802** or internally managed within the non-volatile memory devices **804A-804N**.

FIG. **10** illustrates a flow diagram of a method **1000** for performing adaptive error correction in accordance with an embodiment. The depicted blocks may be part of or in addition to another process and/or may be performed in any suitable order to provide adaptive error correction. The method **1000** can be implemented for a variety of memory system configurations and is described in reference to FIGS. **1-10**. For instance, the method **1000** can be performed by non-volatile memory devices **204A-N**, **404A-N**, and/or **804A-N**.

At block **1002**, data are read from a memory array of a non-volatile memory device in a memory system, such as data **214** from memory array **212** of non-volatile memory device **202A** in memory system **200**. At block **1004**, error correcting logic, such as error correcting logic **218**, can check the data for at least one error condition stored in the memory array. For example, an error-correcting code of the data **214** can be computed and error-correcting code check data **216** may be read from the memory array **212**. The error correcting logic **218** can identify that the at least one error condition exists based on a mismatch between the error-correcting code of the data **214** and the error-correcting code

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check data **216** from the memory array **212**. The error-correcting code check data **216** read from the memory array **212** can be used to generate a corrected version of the data **214** to write-back to the memory array **212** at a desired time.

At block **1006**, it is determined whether at least one error condition exists in the data read from the memory array. At block **1008**, based on determining that the at least one error condition exists, a write-back indicator is asserted by the error correcting logic to request correction of the at least one error condition. For example, the error correcting logic **218** can cause the write-back request **208** to be driven to a low state **308** (i.e., asserted) to notify the memory controller **202** of the write-back. At block **1010**, based on determining that the at least one error condition does not exist, accesses of the memory array continue without asserting the write-back indicator. Thus, read cycle timing of transition **310** need not be modified where no write-back is needed.

As in the example of FIG. **2**, a write-back indicator can be sent from one or more of the non-volatile memory devices **204A-204N** to the memory controller **202** of the memory system **200** as a discrete signal output, e.g., write-back request **208**. Alternatively, as in the example of FIG. **7**, the write-back indicator **706** can be encoded as a bit that is embedded in burst read data returned to the memory controller from the non-volatile memory device in response to a read command. A non-volatile memory device can extend cycle timing monitored by the memory controller while the write-back indicator is asserted, such as a read cycle or write verify cycle.

In an embodiment that includes a write-back buffer in a non-volatile memory device, such as write-back buffer **410** of FIG. **4**, a corrected version of the data can be stored as write-back data in the write-back buffer. The corrected version of the data can change the state of one or more flipped bits using known error correction algorithms in combination with the error-correcting code check data from the memory array. Based on receiving a write-back command from the memory controller, the write-back data can be written to the memory array. Alternatively, the non-volatile memory device can determine when to perform the write-back. The write-back buffer can include multiple write-back buffer entries. The non-volatile memory device may notify the memory controller that a write-back is needed based on determining that a threshold number of write buffer entries is populated, such as threshold **604** relative to the write-back buffer entries **602** of FIG. **6**. The non-volatile memory device can then wait for the memory controller to respond with the write-back command prior to writing the write-back data to the memory array.

In one embodiment, a non-volatile memory device can include a write retry buffer, such as the write retry buffer **810** of FIG. **8**, to support rewrite operations on a write failure. Write data can be saved into a write retry buffer based on receiving a write command for the non-volatile memory device. A write of the write data can be executed to store the write data in the memory array. The reading of the data from the memory array can be performed as a write verify operation, where correction of the at least one error condition is performed as a write retry operation. A write retry can be initiated as needed or periodically by the memory controller.

Technical effects include performing adaptive error correction in a memory system by detecting when a write-back is needed on an error condition adaptively responding by extending a read or write verify cycle to correct the error, providing notification of the need for the write-back to a

memory controller, and/or responding to a write-back command if a write-back indicator is set.

The present invention may be a system, a method, and/or a computer program product. The computer program product may include a computer readable storage medium (or media) having computer readable program instructions thereon for causing a processor to carry out aspects of the present invention. The computer readable storage medium can be a tangible device that can retain and store instructions for use by an instruction execution device. The computer readable storage medium may be, for example, but is not limited to, an electronic storage device, a magnetic storage device, an optical storage device, an electromagnetic storage device, a semiconductor storage device, or any suitable combination of the foregoing. A non-exhaustive list of more specific examples of the computer readable storage medium includes the following: a portable computer diskette, a hard disk, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), an erasable programmable read-only memory (EPROM or Flash memory), a static random access memory (SRAM), a portable compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM), a digital versatile disk (DVD), a memory stick, a floppy disk, a mechanically encoded device such as punch-cards or raised structures in a groove having instructions recorded thereon, and any suitable combination of the foregoing. A computer readable storage medium, as used herein, is not to be construed as being transitory signals per se, such as radio waves or other freely propagating electromagnetic waves, electromagnetic waves propagating through a waveguide or other transmission media (e.g., light pulses passing through a fiber-optic cable), or electrical signals transmitted through a wire.

Computer readable program instructions described herein can be downloaded to respective computing/processing devices from a computer readable storage medium or to an external computer or external storage device via a network, for example, the Internet, a local area network, a wide area network and/or a wireless network. The network may comprise copper transmission cables, optical transmission fibers, wireless transmission, routers, firewalls, gateway computers and/or edge servers. A network adapter card or network interface in each computing/processing device receives computer readable program instructions from the network and forwards the computer readable program instructions for storage in a computer readable storage medium within the respective computing/processing device.

Computer readable program instructions for carrying out operations of the present invention may be assembler instructions, instruction-set-architecture (ISA) instructions, machine instructions, machine dependent instructions, microcode, firmware instructions, state-setting data, or either source code or object code written in any combination of one or more programming languages, including an object oriented programming language such as Smalltalk, C++ or the like, and conventional procedural programming languages, such as the "C" programming language or similar programming languages. The computer readable program instructions may execute entirely on the user's computer, partly on the user's computer, as a stand-alone software package, partly on the user's computer and partly on a remote computer or entirely on the remote computer or server. In the latter scenario, the remote computer may be connected to the user's computer through any type of network, including a local area network (LAN) or a wide area network (WAN), or the connection may be made to an external computer (for example, through the Internet using an Internet Service Provider). In some embodiments, elec-

tronic circuitry including, for example, programmable logic circuitry, field-programmable gate arrays (FPGA), or programmable logic arrays (PLA) may execute the computer readable program instructions by utilizing state information of the computer readable program instructions to personalize the electronic circuitry, in order to perform aspects of the present invention.

Aspects of the present invention are described herein with reference to flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams of methods, apparatus (systems), and computer program products according to embodiments of the invention. It will be understood that each block of the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams, and combinations of blocks in the flowchart illustrations and/or block diagrams, can be implemented by computer readable program instructions.

These computer readable program instructions may be provided to a processor of a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a machine, such that the instructions, which execute via the processor of the computer or other programmable data processing apparatus, create means for implementing the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks. These computer readable program instructions may also be stored in a computer readable storage medium that can direct a computer, a programmable data processing apparatus, and/or other devices to function in a particular manner, such that the computer readable storage medium having instructions stored therein comprises an article of manufacture including instructions which implement aspects of the function/act specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

The computer readable program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer, other programmable data processing apparatus, or other device to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer, other programmable apparatus or other device to produce a computer implemented process, such that the instructions which execute on the computer, other programmable apparatus, or other device implement the functions/acts specified in the flowchart and/or block diagram block or blocks.

The flowchart and block diagrams in the Figures illustrate the architecture, functionality, and operation of possible implementations of systems, methods, and computer program products according to various embodiments of the present invention. In this regard, each block in the flowchart or block diagrams may represent a module, segment, or portion of instructions, which comprises one or more executable instructions for implementing the specified logical function(s). In some alternative implementations, the functions noted in the block may occur out of the order noted in the figures. For example, two blocks shown in succession may, in fact, be executed substantially concurrently, or the blocks may sometimes be executed in the reverse order, depending upon the functionality involved. It will also be noted that each block of the block diagrams and/or flowchart illustration, and combinations of blocks in the block diagrams and/or flowchart illustration, can be implemented by special purpose hardware-based systems that perform the specified functions or acts or carry out combinations of special purpose hardware and computer instructions.

The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. As used herein, the singular forms "a", "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises" and/or

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“comprising,” when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one more other features, integers, steps, operations, element components, and/or groups thereof.

The corresponding structures, materials, acts, and equivalents of all means or step plus function elements in the claims below are intended to include any structure, material, or act for performing the function in combination with other claimed elements as specifically claimed. The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, but is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for adaptive error correction in a memory system, the method comprising:
 - reading data from a memory array of a non-volatile memory device in the memory system;
 - checking, by error correcting logic, the data for at least one error condition stored in the memory array;
 - based on determining that the at least one error condition exists, asserting a write-back indicator, by the error correcting logic, to request correction of the at least one error condition;
 - based on determining that the at least one error condition does not exist, continuing accesses of the memory array without asserting the write-back indicator;
 - saving write data into a write retry buffer based on receiving a write command for the non-volatile memory device;
 - executing a write of the write data to store the write data in the memory array; and

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performing the reading of the data from the memory array as a write verify operation, wherein correction of the at least one error condition is performed as a write retry operation.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining that the at least one error condition exists comprises:
 - computing an error-correcting code of the data;
 - reading error-correcting code check data from the memory array; and
 - identifying that the at least one error condition exists based on a mismatch between the error-correcting code of the data and the error-correcting code check data from the memory array.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - sending the write-back indicator from the non-volatile memory device to a memory controller of the memory system.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the write-back indicator is a discrete signal output by the non-volatile memory device, and the non-volatile memory device extends cycle timing monitored by the memory controller while the write-back indicator is asserted.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the write-back indicator is embedded in burst read data returned to the memory controller from the non-volatile memory device in response to a read command.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - storing a corrected version of the data as write-back data in a write-back buffer; and
 - writing the write-back data to the memory array based on receiving a write-back command from a memory controller.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the write-back buffer comprises multiple write-back buffer entries, and the method further comprising:
 - notifying the memory controller that a write-back is needed based on determining that a threshold number of write buffer entries is populated; and
 - waiting for the memory controller to respond with the write-back command prior to writing the write-back data to the memory array.

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